

**House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related
Programs – Fiscal Year 2012 Member Testimony**

April 13, 2011

**Statement by
Congressman Earl Blumenauer (OR03)**

Good morning Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Lowey. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your Committee, and more importantly, for everything you have done to make clean water and sanitation a priority.

Because of your efforts, literally millions of lives have been not just improved, but saved. You have helped us move from the days when the U.S. barely spent \$70 million on clean water and sanitation in 2005, to now having delivered clean drinking water to over 30 million people, provided sanitation facilities to over 15 million, and disinfected over 9 billion gallons of water.

I am requesting that the Committee continue FY10 funding levels of \$315 million for long-term safe drinking water and sanitation supply projects to implement the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 (P.L.109-121) so that we can continue to save more lives.

The lack of access to clean water and sanitation remains the world's largest health problem, resulting in the death of 1.8 million children under the age of 5 every year – *that is almost 5,000 deaths a day.*

Nearly 900 million people lack access clean drinking water and 2.6 billion people do not have access to sanitation facilities. More than 80 percent of the global health burden is water related, and at any given time, people suffering from water illnesses occupy more than half of the world's hospital beds.

Investing in clean water and sanitation is the most effective way to address our global health crisis. This is in evidence by the fact that improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation will contribute 30 percent to the achievement of each Millennium Development Goal (MDG). Every dollar we invest in water and sanitation leads to eight dollars in savings from reduced healthcare costs and time savings.

Now is not the time to pull back. The US has taken a leadership role on this issue, as has the global community, and we must continue to do our part. Between now and 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that approximately \$10 billion is needed annually to develop sufficient systems to meet the Millennium Development Goal target for halving the proportion of people without access to safe water and sanitation.

The WHO estimates that an additional \$36 billion will need to be spent annually to maintain the water and sanitation facilities that are installed.

If strong support from the U.S. does not continue, we will remain on track to miss the MDG for sanitation by 700 million people, and may actually see that number increase from 2.6 billion to 2.7 billion people.

In 2009, the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the United States, and many other countries spent a total of \$8.6 billion on water and sanitation, just shy of the \$10 billion needed annually.

America is not *the* leader when it comes to clean water and sanitation. We ranked 5th out of all donor countries in 2009 [in order: Japan (\$2.8 billion), Germany (\$0.8 billion) and France (\$0.8 billion), Spain (\$0.6 billion), and then the United States (\$0.5 billion)]. When examined as a share of GDP, the US drops to the bottom of the list, and is outspent by smaller countries such as Norway, Switzerland, Denmark and the Netherlands.

Water has a profound impact on the most important issues of our time. You can't discuss climate change, public health, education, food security, women's issues, or economic development without addressing water. It can bring stability and prosperity, or it can lead to crisis.

The scope of the problem is truly global and interconnected. There are over 260 river basins that cross at least one international border. Sharing this finite resource between countries and providing equity in access will require greater leadership from the U.S.

Already 40 percent of the world's population lives in areas of water scarcity. With the Earth growing by 83 million people every year, the demand – and consequences of inaction – will only increase.

The economic impacts are dire. The Water and Sanitation Program overseen by the World Bank recently reported that inadequate investments in sanitation facilities costs India \$53.8 billion dollars per year, with resulting losses in health care expenditures, opportunity costs, and stunted growth in the tourism sector. The WHO estimates that up to 40 billion working hours are lost each year in Africa to water gathering efforts – which disproportionately impacts young women.

Since the passage of the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act (P.L.109-121), the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs has generously provided funding for safe drinking water and sanitation. Today, I ask that we simply continue the funding from FY10 for long-term safe drinking water and sanitation. Specifically I request:

- \$315 million for long-term safe drinking water and sanitation supply projects, specifically to implement the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 (P.L.109-121) and pursuant to the requirements of and strategy required by that Act.

The President's recent FY12 request of \$302 million for clean water and sanitation is strong, but not sufficient. We must continue to lead.

The search for sanitation and clean drinking water in developing nations remains the picture of lost opportunity. This is one of the preventable tragedies of our time, and this Committee has played an important role in creating a comprehensive and comprehensible strategy, and saved thousands of lives. Thank you for all that you've done so far, and I look forward to working with you, as we build on this progress.